

Weekly Newsletter

To: Regional Organizers, Past Participants,

From: Tiger Cage Vigil and Fast

Date: July 27, 1974

Important Notice - Additional participants will be welcome during coming weeks of the Vigil and Fast. Please consider coming yourself, and please help recruit others to come, preferably for an entire week.

If you yourself, or others you have recruited, are committed to coming to Washington, it is extremely important that that commitment is honored. It is disconcerting and demoralizing (to say the least) for coordinators and project participants to expect people who never show up, or who let us know at the last minute that they are not coming. This is not like a march or rally of thousands of people, where two or three "bodies" more or less makes little difference. One, or two or three participants make a big difference here. Thanks for your consideration.

The Week Just Ended - A group of nine people from Ohio, and one person each from Missouri, California, and Washington, D.C., made up last week's crew. That's rather slim to maintain the tiger cage, the leafletting and talking with passers-by, a vigil, and Congressional visitation-- but they carried through in fine style.

There was lots of company on the Capitol steps last week. Several hundred followers of Rev. Sun Myung Moon and of the Committee for Fairness to the President held a three-day Prayer Fast and Vigil to support President Nixon. They were an interesting contrast to the quiet Tiger Cage Vigil and Fast, as they sang, chanted, cheered, and orated. Some tourists and reporters were impressed by their "respectability" while others commented on how impressed they were by the quiet and logic of our vigilliers. A number of interesting conversations were held with members of the large group-- but in view of the different outlooks and purposes of the two vigils, very little unity could be achieved. Tiger Cage Vigil and Fast people leafletted around the East Front of the Capitol, because the Capitol steps were almost blocked by the Prayer and Fast vigilliers.

Finances - The Tiger Cage Vigil and Fast would like to take this opportunity to thank the following organizations for their recently-received contributions to this project: the New England Community for Nonviolent Action, in Voluntown, Connecticut, which has sent in two separate contributions; the Peace Boutique, of Newton, Massachusetts; and the International Committee, of Minneapolis Minnesota. We are deeply grateful for these gifts, for they have been of tremendous assistance to us. In addition, we would like to thank those individuals-- mostly past participants-- who have sent in individual contributions.

The Tiger Cage Vigil and Fast is being run on a very limited budget for a national project. Participants, for the most part, pay their own travel, their own housing, and their own food when they are not fasting. Nevertheless, we are still in urgent need of additional contributions. One way in which you can help is to solicit funds for the Tiger Cage Vigil and Fast from organizations in your own community: Friends Meetings, churches, civic organizations-- and from interested individuals. Thank you for your assistance.

News Coverage - How You Can Help - The effect of the Vigil and Fast is multiplied if there is news coverage all around the country about it. So far, there have been one or two very short AP wire stories, an excellent PBS radio interview with Joan Baez, and some local coverage in partici-



pants' hometown papers (have you sent us the clippings?). However, impeachment proceedings and government hand-outs take precedence over projects such as ours. One way in which you can help, no matter where you live, is to call your local news media (newspapers, radio, TV) and ask what they have had over the wires about the Tiger Cage Vigil and Fast. Explain that you've heard about the project, but haven't seen any coverage. Several such calls will jog the media to ask the Associated Press and United Press International about the project, and several such calls from local media may very well result in more interest by the wire services. We are working on this from here also, but your assistance will be valuable.

Of course, another way in which you can help is to write letters to the editor of your local papers, and call in to talk shows about the Tiger Cage Vigil and Fast and about the issues which we are attempting to raise. If you have been a participant, your personal comments will be of special interest.

Carol Bragg's Fast - Carol Bragg, one of the initiators of the Tiger Cage Vigil and Fast and Rhode Island Field Secretary for AFSC, is now entering the sixth week of her fast. During the first week of her fast she took only water; she is now also taking small quantities of juice. Carol is working actively on coordination of the project, and has recently passed a physical exam given by our ever-watchful doctor, Mary Coleman.

Reports From Participants - The following reports were written by folks who participated in the Tiger Cage Vigil and Fast during the week of July 21 to July 27:

Silent but strong, patient but forceful, describes a week whose thrust was raising the consciousness of the American people to a vital human issue which was almost lost in the fine print of the Paris Peace Agreement. . . I have but one frightening thought-- how much is still unknown to us, how much truth still lies buried in the haze of 'national security'?

--Sr. Carol Nagi, O.P.

I had a chance to exchange thoughts with people from every state and a lot of countries. The non-Americans were so aware of the political prisoners and so surprised to see our group at the Capitol. I'm sure we'll be in their stories of America as we'll be in thousands of their photographs. I'll remember the Japanese Buddhists who were going back to Japan to organize their friends into a pressure group to aid the political prisoners. And the Oriental family which asked if they might be allowed to have their picture taken with me "to show that some Americans really do care about yellow people." Then there was the man from Australia who insisted on giving a donation because he felt we were the true strength of America. Neither these people, nor the thousands of others I met, would have entered my life in Canton, Ohio. I would never have seen American parents painfully explaining to their small children what oppression was and admitting to them that America is not perfect. There was the man who told his son of 8 or 9 years, "It's your duty as an American to see that this (the tiger cage) is never acceptable for any reason."

The experiences are so numerous that most must remain inside of me, becoming a part of my life forever. Tiger Cage Vigil and Fast, I thank you all for this new dimension to my feeling and thought. Shalom.

--Lynda Smith-Starks